



Battlemind Training I

Transitioning from Combat to Home

Training Timeframe: At Post-Deployment

*See Notes Pages for Briefing Instructions

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This training was developed by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. This module is designed to be administered immediately at re-deployment as part of the Deployment Cycle Support Program. A follow-up training module is also available for the 3-6 months post-deployment period. Please send comments, suggestions, or questions about training and implementation to the project POC: LTC Carl A. Castro (301-319-9174). carl.castro@us.army.mil. -Version2.0 16NOV05

[NOTE TO TRAINER: The Trainer should have deployment experience to either Iraq or Afghanistan and use their experience to reinforce the key points. The speaker notes provide points to be covered for each slide, but should NOT be read verbatim to the Soldiers. Use the questions contained in the speaker notes to involve Soldiers in the training and to encourage them to share their own experiences. Statements in brackets [] are notes to speakers. **Ideally, the training should be given at the platoon level to facilitate discussion.**]

During this training we are going to talk about Battlemind. Battlemind is the Soldier's inner strength to face fear and adversity in combat, with courage. All of you in this room have Battlemind. Your performance in Iraq (or Afghanistan) proved it.

Battlemind training will offer you an introduction on how to maximize the Battlemind skills you demonstrated in combat so that you can use them as you transition home. We will discuss how to adapt these Battlemind skills so that they are just as effective at home as they were in combat.

Battlemind training focuses on building your proven strengths.



The Combat Veteran's Paradox



**After returning from the war-zone,
combat vets may feel a little edgy
and pissed off...
but they are usually happy to be
back home.**

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History has taught us that combat veterans from every war America has fought in from the Civil War to the Spanish-American War, to World War I and World War II, from the Korean War to the Vietnam War to the first Gulf War to the present, report being angry and edgy...but there always happy to be back home.

Soldiers feel edgy and pissed off. Every one here understand that. Does anyone notice how short your temper or how low your tolerance is for when people do stupid stuff? And isn't it funny that it seems that people do more stupid stuff than before you deployed?

However, how many of you are happy to be back home? We have never heard a Soldier tell us that they weren't happy to be back home. That's the paradox. Soldiers are both happy to be home, and at the same time a bit edgy and angry.

I'm going to tell you things today that happened to Soldiers returning from OIF/OEF. Many of you may be completely fine. But you can use what you're going to hear today to help your buddies. That's a huge theme of what we're going to discuss today. It's all about helping your buddies out. Helping each other out; looking out for each other.



The War-Zone Environment



Physically harsh, mentally demanding, dangerous, no privacy, no alcohol, no family/civilian friends, chaos, destruction and death, yet...



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Let's acknowledge right up front that the combat environment is very harsh and demanding. You all know this better than I do because you just got back.

It's hot. People are trying to kill you. People are shooting at you; there are IEDS; there is frustration with the locals for supporting or knowing about ambushes/attacks; there is no alcohol...and there's no sex, right?
YET....



Thoughts of Returning to the War-zone



Many Soldiers report a desire to return to **combat**:

“Unfinished business”

- Mission incomplete, job wasn’t finished

“Be all that you can be”

- Doing the job you’re trained to do

“There is more control”

- Life is “simpler” and focused in the war-zone

“Home may have changed”

- Transitioning home is difficult

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Many Soldiers tell us when they have been home for about a month and back from block leave that life was simpler while deployed: fewer taskings, fewer distractions, Soldiers could focus on the mission.

#1: What was garrison life like before you left?

[Note to speaker: The most important point to convey is that garrison life hasn’t changed. Many Soldiers report that they are over-tasked, treated poorly, and victims of poor planning. In garrison these stressors are often perceived as big problems. Its good to remind Soldiers here that garrison life is not necessarily unstressful (i.e., “hey you taskings” will be back)].

Home life is more complicated as you renegotiate your home roles and establish/accept new roles. Regardless of rank, redeploying Soldiers must go through this.



The Transitioning Warrior



From “War zone” to “Home zone”

- **Battlemind** is the Soldier’s inner strength to face fear and adversity in combat with courage.
- Combat skills and battle mindset sustained your survival in the *war-zone*...
- But Battlemind may be “hazardous” to your social & behavioral health in the *home zone*...

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Battlemind is what helped get you through your deployment.

However, if you respond at home the same way you responded in combat, you’re going to have problems. You must take your Battlemind skills and **adapt** them so that they are just effective at home as they were in the combat environment.



Successful Transitions



- Every Soldier will transition home in their own way.
- The key to a successful transition home is to adapt your combat skills so that you are just as effective at home as you were in combat.
- Build on your proven strengths.

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Each one of you will react differently, and transition home differently. Some of what we will discuss today will pertain to you, and some of it won't. However what I am going to tell you is based on what Soldiers have told us who have returned from OIF and OEF over the past 3 years.

How many of you have been on more than one deployment?

I want your input. If you have a story that illustrates what we're talking about, great. Jump in. If you disagree with something I say, jump in.



Combat Skills You All Possess



Battlemind skills helped you survive in combat, but may cause you problems if not adapted when you get home.

Buddies (cohesion) vs. Withdrawal
Accountability vs. Controlling
Targeted Aggression vs. Inappropriate Aggression
Tactical Awareness vs. Hypervigilance
Lethally Armed vs. “Locked and Loaded” at Home
Emotional Control vs. Anger/Detachment
Mission Operational Security (OPSEC) vs. Secretiveness
Individual Responsibility vs. Guilt
Non-Defensive (combat) Driving vs. Aggressive Driving
Discipline and Ordering vs. Conflict

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We have taken the word Battlemind, and have used each letter to denote a combat skill that has to be modified to facilitate your transition home. This list only comprises a subset of your combat skills. However, this is the subset of skills that we will focus on today. [Note to Speaker: Do NOT go through each of these skills, this is only intended to be an Introduction.]

We are going to focus on your strengths. However, we want to make sure that we don't let your proven strengths become a weakness.

The key point is that if you used the same battlemind-set that you had in combat when you get home you may have experienced some problems.

Soldiers frequently let how they were thinking and reacting in combat affect how they are thinking and reacting back home. If you do, then negative things can happen. And if you are still thinking and behaving, now that you are home, the same way you thought and behaved in combat, then these are indicators that you might need some help.

I am also going to ask you throughout this presentation to share your own deployment and transition experiences. The idea is that you all can learn from each other as well, and help each other as you continue your transition home.



Buddies (Cohesion) vs. Withdrawal



- B** **In Combat:** No one understands your experience except your buddies who were there with you. Your life depended on your trust in your unit.
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- D**
- At Home:** May prefer to be with battle buddies rather than with spouse, family, or other friends. Assume only those who were there with you in combat understand or are interested. May avoid speaking about yourself to friends and family.

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In combat, you all have gotten tighter...The bonds you made in war may last the rest of your life. For some of you, these bonds may feel stronger and more important to you than any other relationships in your life.

At home, Soldiers often report that they feel closer to their battle buddies than their family and they may not want to be around other Soldiers who have not deployed because you believe that they can't understand you or your experiences.



Buddies (Cohesion) vs. Withdrawal



B Transitioning the Combat Skill

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Cohesion: *Combat results in bonds with fellow Soldiers that will last a lifetime; back home, your friends and family have changed. Re-establishing these bonds takes time and work.*

Action: Develop and renew relationships at home. Spend individual time with each of your loved ones; balance time spent with buddies and family. Provide and accept support from them.

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Recognize that renewing relationships at home takes time.

How many are married? How many have kids? How many of you have girl/boyfriends, or want to start a new relationship?

Young kids may not recognize you or may be afraid of you. This may catch you off-guard. So you need to approach them slowly.

If you feel the need to hang out with your buddies, let your spouse or significant other know that you need to spend time with them to help you with your transition.

So what is this skill we're asking you to adapt? You guys have the necessary skills to form relationship with people you can trust. You have the skills, the strength, to create tight relationship. You know how to do it. So when you get back home, work on renewing those relationships.



Accountability vs. Controlling



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In Combat: Maintaining control of weapon and gear is necessary for survival. All personal items are important to you.

At Home: Become angry when someone moves or messes with your stuff, even if it is insignificant. Nobody cares about doing things right except for you.

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Soldiers returning from combat continue to feel the need to remain in control. This includes knowing where all of your personal possessions are, and being reluctant to let others make decisions that affect you. For example, when a family member or a roommate moves something of yours, you may overreact, just as you would in a combat environment if you were unable to find a critical (or even insignificant) piece of gear or personal item.

Just be aware that you don't have to use the same rules at home.



Accountability vs. Controlling



B Transitioning the Combat Skill

A Accountability: *Back home, the small details are no longer important; family decisions and personal space are best shared.*

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Action: Distinguish between what is and isn't important. Relinquishing control at home does not place you at risk. Don't be afraid to apologize when you overreact. Apologizing, especially to your spouse or significant other, is not a sign of weakness.

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Distinguish between what is and isn't important. Learn to relinquish control.

What's important and what's not? While deployed you were completely accountable for all your own stuff. You need to figure out what's important and what's not.

So, for example, at home, someone may move my shower shoes. But at home I don't need shower shoes. On deployment I need to wear them though. But if everything is important to you, then you're going to drive other people crazy.

#2: What is accountability? Accountability is taking care of important stuff. In the combat zone, you were completely accountable for all your stuff. At home, others may routinely move / mess with your stuff. The stuff that was important in combat may not be important at home. So you need to be clear about what is important.

Remember that children and pets are by nature are "out of control." Be patient with them and closely monitor your reactions to them.

#3: For those of you who are married or in significant relationship, how many of you have apologized to your spouse or girlfriend/boyfriend for something that you didn't think you needed to apologize for? Why did you do this? [to keep the peace]. Apologizing, especially to your spouse or significant other, is a sign of strength of character, not a weakness.



Targeted vs. Inappropriate Aggression



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In Combat: Soldiers make split second decisions that are lethal in a highly ambiguous environment. Kill or be killed. Anger keeps you pumped up, alert, awake, and alive.

At Home: Hostility towards others.
Inappropriate anger, assault, spouse abuse.
Snapping at buddies or NCOs.
Overreactions to minor insults.

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Split-second decision making involving aggressive acts is important in combat – it kept you alive and your buddies alive. You don't want to do this at home though. Aggressive acts at home is called assault, spouse abuse, inappropriate outbursts.



Targeted vs. Inappropriate Aggression



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Transitioning the Combat Skill

Targeted Aggression: *“Combat anger” involves appropriate responses to the actual threat level to ensure safety.*

Action: Assess whether there is a real threat to your safety. Think before you act. Wait before you respond (count to 10). Walk away. Talk to someone – get an azimuth check.

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Combat anger involves making the appropriate response in the appropriate situation. So you have the skill, you know how to respond appropriately in very ambiguous and dangerous situations.

At home you will probably get very angry over “the little things”. Realize this, and check yourself. We ask you to count to ten, but if you make it to three, that’s good too, if it checks you from doing something you’ll regret. One Soldier wrote inside his hat, “It’s not always about me, and it’s not always that important.” Think about that. In combat, everything is split-second. Most places where you’ll be back home, you don’t have to make an immediate decision, nor do you have to respond immediately.

Vignette: When you go out to the bar or club with your buddies, someone may bump into you or mess with you, this is the time to turn to your buddy and get an azimuth check. Ask your buddy, “Should I kick this guy’s ass or what?” It’s your buddy’s responsibility NOT to say “yes!” Look out for each other.

#4: How many of you have already had a “short-fuse” incident since re-deploying?



Tactical Awareness vs. Hypervigilance



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In Combat: Survival depends on being aware at all times of your surroundings and reacting immediately to sudden changes, such as sniper fire or mortar attacks.

At Home: You may feel keyed up or anxious in large groups of people or in situations where you feel confined. Being easily startled, especially when you hear loud bangs or noises. Having difficulty sleeping or having nightmares.

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You may be anxious and alert in large groups of people, which may happen at unexpected times like in the grocery store, the mall, or church. You start looking for exits as soon as you enter a room. You may be suspicious of others, especially Arab looking folks. **#5: “Has anyone noticed this happening to you since you’ve been back?” (Ask Soldiers).**

What soldiers sometimes tell us is the first thing they are looking for when they enter a room is the way out, the exit. Or sitting in a theater in the middle section where it’s not easy to get to the exit, like where you guys are sitting (point), may cause you to be anxious.

Vignette: One Soldier told us that a tire blew out in front of him in a 18 wheeler. What do you think he thought it was? This type of reaction is common.

We hear from a lot of Soldiers that they can’t sleep, that they have nightmares. They say, “I don’t sleep”. This too is common.



Tactical Awareness vs. Hypervigilance



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Transitioning the Combat Skill

Tactical Awareness: *Combat requires alertness and sustained attention; back home it takes time to learn to relax.*

Action: Monitor for revved-up reactions to minor events. Engage in regular exercise. Don't drink alcohol or take illegal drugs to fall asleep.

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If you can learn to be alert and aware when the situation demands it, like when you were in the combat zone, then I know that you can learn to relax and be at ease when the threat is low.

Tell your spouse, children, relatives, and friends to approach you in ways that are “safe”, not quietly from behind. Let them know that you are still on alert. And don't be embarrassed if you feel the need to hit the dirt or have to leave a particular situation, just be prepared to explain why you did so. Tell your friends and loved ones that you're still in “alert mode”. This is part of the normal transition process back home from combat.

Find healthy ways to calm yourself. One thing that really helps improve sleep is to get into a routine. Eat and exercise regularly, work your body hard to naturally fatigue it. This makes sleeping easier.

If you are having difficulty sleeping, do NOT self-medicate with drugs or alcohol to feel calmer or to help you sleep. Alcohol actually makes your sleep worse. Jim (Beam) and Jack (Daniels) are not effective sleep aids.

If you are married, let your spouse know you may have difficulty sleeping or have nightmares.



Lethally Armed vs. “Locked and Loaded” at Home



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In Combat: Carrying your weapon at all times was mandatory and a matter of life or death.

At Home: Need to have weapons on you, in your home and/or car at all times, believing that you and your loved ones are not safe without them.

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In combat you were armed to the teeth. You had your weapon with you at all times, some of you carried grenade launchers and knives.

#6: How many of you feel like you're missing something without your weapon?

At home you may have this desire to continue to remain armed. You may want to have weapons with you at home, in your car, in your office, and some of you may even want to continue to carry weapons. You may want to have a gun, a knife, nunchucks, brass knuckles, billy clubs. Resist this desire.



Lethally Armed vs. “Locked and Loaded” at Home



B Transitioning the Combat Skill

A Armed: *In the combat zone you developed and followed strict rules for weapons safety, including when to fire your weapon.*

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E **Action:** Resist the desire to have a weapon

M “locked and loaded.” Follow all laws and safety

I precautions regarding weapons. Never drive

N with a loaded weapon. Never use a weapon

D to threaten or intimidate loved ones.

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When you were in combat, I know two things for certain. You followed weapons safety rules and the rules of engagement (ROEs) very carefully. So you have the skill to safely handle and use weapons. So be safe back here!

People have different attitudes and opinions about having a weapon, just follow the rules and keep it in lock box, safe. Never drive with a loaded weapon and never threaten a loved one with a weapon.

If you plan to keep a weapon (s), be mindful of your family and home. Talk about your choices, and listen to your spouse and their level of comfort around weapons.



Emotional Control vs. Anger/Detachment



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In Combat: Controlling your emotions during combat is critical for mission success. This control quickly became second nature.

At Home: Failing to display emotions, or only showing anger, around family and friends will hurt your relationships. You may be seen as detached or uncaring.

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Combat is about thinking, not letting your emotions influence your decisions. This control is second nature. Keeping in control of emotions is critical.

#7: How do you think you will be perceived at home if you fail to display emotions? [typical answers you may get include “detached”, “uncaring”] That’s right, your family and friends will think that you don’t care or your detached.

One emotion that many Soldiers are very adept at showing when they return from combat is Anger. After returning from war, Soldiers tend to be angry and pissed off. Soldiers often tell us that they feel either detached or angry. The key is to recognize that this is common, but that there are other emotions that are important.



Emotional Control vs. Anger/Detachment



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Transitioning the Combat Skill

Emotional Control: *Involves both holding in and expressing feelings.*

E Action: Showing emotions is important for sustaining personal relationships. Displaying emotions is not unmilitary and doesn't mean you are weak.

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View emotional control as both holding in and expressing your feelings. Controlling your emotions involves both aspects, showing and holding in, it is not just holding in.

Showing emotions is important for sustaining personal relationships. Displaying emotions is not unmilitary and doesn't mean you are weak.

If you know that you do not like to display emotions, then you need to articulate them verbally. If you are angry or pleased, just say it "That really pisses me off" or "that makes me happy". You've got to say it. You have to communicate it somehow.



Mission OPSEC vs. Secretiveness



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In Combat: Talk about mission only with those who need to know. Can only talk about combat experiences and missions with unit members or those who have “been there---done that.”

At Home: Soldiers may avoid sharing any of their deployment experiences with spouse, significant other, family or friends. You don’t tell your spouse where you’re going or when you’ll get back (and get suspicious when they ask).

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One of the first things you learn in the military is you only tell people information that they need to know. Lots of us use that to avoid telling others things. To blow people off, we tell them, “You don’t have a need to know.”

#8: How many of you have already been asked about your deployment experiences? What did they ask you? They usually ask, “How was it? Did you kill anyone?” What was your response? Did this make you angry?

It’s normal to avoid sharing gruesome details about combat experiences with spouse or significant others. Common reasons given: “nobody else would understand” and explaining it is not necessary because they “don’t have a need to know”.



Mission OPSEC vs. Secretiveness



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Transitioning the Combat Skill

OPSEC: *Provide information to those who need to know. Requires trusting your fellow Soldiers. The "need to know" now includes friends and family.*

Action: Realize that your family has a need to know something about your experiences while deployed. Tell your story, but in the way you want to tell it. Share with your significant other what you're doing, day to day. Be proud of your service.

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Realize that your family has a need to know something about your experiences while deployed. But you need to tell your story in the way you want to tell it. You may feel very uncomfortable telling family and friends what happened while deployed, but you need to find a way to tell something about your deployment, to the degree that you are comfortable.

Recognize that your family and friends want to know about your experiences but may be afraid to ask, or not really want too many details even though they ask, or act indifferent when you tell your story. It's your story, tell it the way you want to tell it.

Share with your significant other what you're doing, day to day. Be proud of your service.

When someone asks you about your deployment experiences, have two answers prepared: a short answer and long answer. Use your short answer for those that you really don't want to share your experiences with. It is polite to say something. Use your long answer for those that you really want to share your experiences with.

The key is to be proud of your service and your accomplishments while you were deployed. Tell your story.



Individual Responsibility vs. Guilt



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In Combat: Your responsibility is to survive and do your best to keep your buddies alive.

At Home: You may feel you have failed your buddies if they were killed or seriously injured. You may be bothered by memories of those wounded or killed.

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Responsibility involves surviving the chaos of the war-zone, never leaving a buddy behind, and doing what you can to help others.

You may believe that you could have changed what happened or blame yourself, your leadership, your equipment etc. You may feel enraged and unable to direct that anger to anyone or anything in particular now that you are home.

There is a great deal of luck surviving combat, as you all know. You don't know when the IED or VBIED will happen.



Individual Responsibility vs. Guilt



B A T T L E M I N D Transitioning the Combat Skill

Responsibility: *In the “heat of battle,” Soldiers must act—they must make life and death decisions. Later, it’s learning from these decisions...without second guessing.*

Action: Recognize that there are human limits to preventing death and injuries. Don’t allow your survival guilt to destroy you. Your buddy would want you to drive on.

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Casualties occur in war, accidents happen, good people die.

Nothing to be ashamed of if you survive. Nothing to be guilty of if you survive.

You’re all heroes, you have made sacrifices. Those who didn’t make it back made the ultimate sacrifice. If there is anyone of you having guilt, if you could have gone back to the day before your buddy died and he said what if I died would you want me to drive on? He’d say yes.

It’s easy in hind sight to second guess your decisions or the decisions of others. Would your buddy want you to be putting yourself through the wringer right now?. No, he/she would want you to drive on.

Remember the fallen and live a life worthy of their sacrifices.



Non-Defensive (Combat) vs. Aggressive Driving



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In Combat: Driving unpredictably and fast, with rapid lane changes, keeping other vehicles at a distance and straddling the middle line are skills designed to avoid IEDs and VBIEDs.

At Home: Aggressive driving leads to speeding tickets, accidents, fatalities.

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Combat driving, how many of you were drivers in theater? **#9: What kind of moves did you use in theater that may get you in trouble at home on the interstate?** [Typical responses include: driving fast, ramming other vehicles, weaving, driving on the center line.]

Back home, we call driving fast, making rapid lane changes without signaling and cutting people off reckless driving.

After every war, accident rates go up because Soldiers drive too fast or recklessly or drive under the influence of alcohol. This may involve seeking an adrenaline rush, anger, road rage, or overreacting to perceived dangers.



Non-Defensive (Combat) vs. Aggressive Driving



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Transitioning the Combat Skill

Combat Driving: *In combat, driving fast is necessary to avoid danger; back home, driving fast 'feels right,' but is dangerous.*

Action: Shift from offensive to defensive driving. Control your anger. Obey traffic laws. Use turn signals. Slow down.

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#10: You're a different driver now than you were before, aren't you? How do you drive differently? [typical responses are: more alert, quicker reflexes, head on a swivel/scanning ahead as you drive]. Adapt those skills, but take it from being offensive to doing what you learned in driver's education, defensive driving.

Realize the relative safety of roads at home, pay attention and assess threat and danger accurately. Be aware that you may have strong automatic startle responses to bridges, roadside debris, etc. and a very low tolerance for "bad drivers" and traffic. You must follow the laws, use turn signals, cut it down a notch, slow down.

You have returned being in combat a year, and you have survived. Don't come back and get yourself killed in a traffic accident. You deserve more than that.



Discipline & Ordering vs. Conflict



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In Combat: Survival depends on discipline and obeying orders. Following orders kept you and those around you safe and in control.

At Home: Inflexible interactions (ordering and demanding behaviors) with your spouse, children, and friends often lead to conflict.

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We're all in a military unit. When an NCO or officer gives an order, we follow it. We don't say "well, I don't know if it's a good idea, or I don't feel like doing it." Unless it's unlawful or immoral, we follow that order. But if you stay in that same frame of mind and come home and expect your spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend, or kids to follow orders, that will get you into trouble.

Nobody likes following orders.

My spouse tells me that I wouldn't want to be married to someone who just followed orders. I say, let's try it for a few weeks and see how I like it. *(Can vary this as speaker sees fit)*



Discipline & Ordering vs. Conflict



B A T T L E M I N D Transitioning the Combat Skill

Discipline & Ordering: *Giving and following orders involves a clear chain of command which does not exist within families.*

Action: Acknowledge that friends and family members have been successful while you have been gone and may have developed new ways of doing things. Always be prepared to negotiate. A family is not a military unit.

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You give orders on the battlefield - at home you ask, request, suggest, etc., things that you want done.

Just remember, no one likes to take orders.



The Alcohol Transition



Restricted Alcohol vs. Available Alcohol

In Combat: In the combat theatre, alcohol use was limited.

At Home: Alcohol is now plentiful.

Action: Pace yourself. Don't drink and drive. Don't drink to calm down or if you are feeling depressed. Don't drink if you're having trouble sleeping; it actually makes the sleep worse! Don't encourage each other to get drunk. Look out for each other.

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I know you've heard the lectures about drinking and driving. I only want to make two points. Don't encourage each other to drink, especially if one of you is feeling down. And look out for each other. Alcohol makes all problems worse.



Battlemind Injuries



Battlemind injuries can occur to any Soldier when combat skills are not adapted for use at home.

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#11: How many of you know who Audie Murphy is? Who has heard of the Audie Murphy Club? Audie Murphy was the most decorated Soldier from World War II. He won the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, and he was injured twice. **#12: How many knew he suffered from post-traumatic disease disorder (PTSD), before there was even a post-traumatic stress disorder described, and had problems transitioning home.** Battlemind provides a set of skills to facilitate your transition back home, and prevent problems such as PTSD, family or relationship problems, alcohol problems, or problems at work. Audie Murphy advocated for all Soldiers to get help when they needed it.

The key is that performance in combat is not related to whether you will or won't have a battlemind injury.



Battlemind Symptoms



- Strong memories, nightmares or unpleasant thoughts after combat
- Feeling numb, detached, or avoiding things that remind you of the war-zone
- Being revved up: trouble sleeping, irritable and angry, easily startled

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I know that many of you have heard these before but I want to review them.

Soldiers after combat report that they have nightmares, they can't get what happened out of their head, they don't feel anything at all (numb), they want to avoid anything that reminds them of their experience in combat, that they are revved up, that they have a hard time sleeping, and that they are irritable or angry.

These are normal and common reactions and symptoms after combat. When these reactions and symptoms last more than 30 days, become severe, or interfere with your life, this may indicate that you or your buddy has post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). If you observe problems in yourself or your buddies that persist or affect your ability to work or get along with others then you should consider getting help.

The earlier you get help, the better off you'll be.



Impact of Battlemind Injuries



- These symptoms are common following combat; they usually decrease after returning home.
- For some, these common combat symptoms persist.
- These symptoms may interfere with job performance, relationships, and enjoying life.
- The earlier Soldiers seek help, the quicker they will feel better.
- Early treatment protects careers and relationships.

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You may or may not have any of the symptoms (from the previous slide), but if you do, it's normal. And it's normal that if you have some of the symptoms, you will probably get better over time.

But sometimes your symptoms and reactions don't shut off, your Battlemind hasn't adapted to the home environment.

You might want to start worrying about yourself or your buddy if there are problems getting along with other people, or not doing your job effectively.

Most importantly, each and everyone of you after a year of combat have put your life on the line and you have earned the right to enjoy life. You deserve to enjoy life.

We know that the earlier Soldiers get help, the sooner they'll get better. Sometimes Soldiers can go to their friends but sometimes they need to get help from a professional. This is true, these are facts. It's especially important for leaders to know this.

Getting help simply involves working to turn-off these reactions and symptoms that didn't shut off on their own.



Cues to Seek Professional Help



- Readjustment issues are intense and/or last more than a few months
- Suicidal or Homicidal thinking, intent, or actions
- Excessive substance use
- Performance problems at work or at home
- Feeling distant or cut-off from spouse, thinking or talking about separation/divorce
- Conflict, arguing and hostility
- Feeling low, hopeless, or not able to enjoy life
- Spouse, supervisor or buddy suggests you need help

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If any of the following occurs you may need to get help.

Also if your spouse or significant other tells you that you have changed and should talk to someone...

OR

If your supervisor tells you that your performance has declined and/or that you should talk to someone...

OR

If your buddy or a close friend tells you that you should talk to someone...

OR

If you are having thoughts, feelings, or behaviors seem out-of-control or dangerous, including excessive use of alcohol or drugs, difficulty sleeping, and you wonder whether you should talk to someone...

If you're thinking of hurting yourself or killing somebody, you need to get help. And if you are doing any illegal drugs, you need to get help.



Mental Health Resources



The Army has established numerous ways for Soldiers and Families to get help for mental health issues:

Buddies/ Leaders

Chaplain/ Troop Medical Clinic/ Mental/Behavioral Health Services

Off-post Mental Health professional/ Army/ Military One Source: 1-800-342-9647; www.militaryonesource.com

Veterans Affairs (VA) Hospitals/Clinics

VA Vet Centers

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There are numerous ways to get help.

The first line of support are buddies and first line supervisors who should support Soldiers getting help.

The most important resources for getting help are your unit chaplain, troop medical clinic and the mental and behavioral health services. Many of these professionals have deployed themselves and they understand the problems Soldiers face.

There are VA hospitals and clinics in many cities, and VA Vet Centers located within 50 miles of most Soldiers' homes.

The Army One Source is another resource for you, your spouse and/or children, particularly for relationship problems. The Army One Source provides up to 6 free counseling sessions per problem. This help is confidential, they don't tell your chain of command that you are being seen, and this help will not appear in your military records. The Army has already paid for it whether you use it or not.

Audie Murphy knew that most Soldiers who needed or wanted help wouldn't get it. Many Soldiers with mental health problems believe that no one can help them. That it is up to them to fix any problem they have. Audie Murphy thought that too, but he admitted that he was wrong. That no matter how brave he was in combat, no matter how well he performed, he knew he needed help. He knew he had a problem that he couldn't solve on his own. It took courage for him to ask for help.



Summary



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- **Battlemind** is the Soldier's inner strength to face fear and adversity in combat with courage.
 - Getting help for a Battlemind injury is NOT a sign of weakness.
 - It takes courage to ask for help and it takes leadership to help a fellow Soldier get help.

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All Soldiers returning from combat must learn to adapt their Battlemind skills so that they can be just effective at home as they were in combat. If you are unable to adapt your combat skills so they are appropriate back home, then you have problem...you have an injury.

How many of you have heard freedom isn't free?

Freedom is free for most Americans. But not for you all. Everyone of you has made serving your country a personal priority and you've made the sacrifices. Most American's won't make that sacrifice. So be proud of your service.

I want to leave you with one final thought, that is also on the slide, "It takes courage to ask for help, and it takes leadership to help a fellow Soldier get help."



WELCOME HOME!

Point of Contact & Disclaimer:

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This presentation contains a combination of research findings and recommendations, many of which are based on personal observations and experiences. Therefore, the opinions and views expressed here are those of the Land Combat Study Team, and should not be considered representing the U.S. Army or the Department of Defense.

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Welcome Home and Thank You!

[hand out brochures]

Please send comments and suggestions for improving this brief to LTC Carl A. Castro (301-319-9174), carl.castro@us.army.mil. Thanks to COL Charles Hoge and the WRAIR Land Combat Study Team for their assistance in the development and validation of this training material, and the VA Puget Sound Deployment Health Clinic for review.